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MUSICIANS AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS ON THE ROCK RELIEFS IN THE ELAMITE SANCTUARY OF KUL-E FARAH (IZEH)

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Izeh, formerly Malamir, is a village in the province of Khuzestan, located 190 km. south-west of Isfahan and 125 km. north-east of Ahwaz, in the Bakhtiari mountains of the western foothills of the Zagros.¹

The village is situated at the south entrance of a fertile valley orientated north-west south-east, approximately 22 km. long and 10 km. wide, completely surrounded by mountains, at an altitude of more than 800 m. Kul-e Farah is a gorge cut through the mountains at the side of the plain, 7 km. east north-east of Izeh.²

The Kul-e Farah gorge was used as an open-air sanctuary in the Neo-Elamite period. It was fitted with cult installations and decorated with six votive rock reliefs. Three of these reliefs were carved on the mountain side, the three others on large boulders.³

In my first paper on the subject, in order to avoid confusion, I gave the rock reliefs roman numerals.⁴ This numbering follows the order of the reliefs from left to right facing the gorge.⁵

Three of the six Kul-e Farah reliefs represent a group of musicians. The composition of each group in sequence is as follows:

Kul-e Farah I: a vertical-harp player, a horizontal-harp player, a drum player.

Kul-e Farah III: three vertical-harp players.

Kul-e Farah IV: two groups, each with a horizontal-harp player and two vertical-harp players; the six harpists are preceded by a leader.⁶

The existence of musicians on Kul-e Farah I has long been known. This rock relief has been considered to be the most important one at Kul-e Farah because it is the only one bearing inscriptions and also the best preserved.⁷ However various identifications of the instruments on Kul-e Farah I have been proposed. Several types of harp have been attributed to the first musician, a kind of santour, a lyre or a kithara to the second one, and a wind instrument, a flute or an unidentified instrument to the third one.⁸ The horizontal harp of the second musician has been identified by M. Duchesne-Guillemin, and the rectangular drum of the third musician by C. Sachs.⁹

While the musicians on Kul-e Farah I are well-known¹⁰, those represented on the Kul-e Farah III and IV reliefs remained totally ignored until recently.¹¹

The representations of the musicians at Kul-e Farah were studied in my unpublished doctoral thesis,¹² and

we shall investigate the matter further in the present paper.¹³

Due to the poor preservation of the Kul-e Farah reliefs, photographic documentation is inadequate. Therefore, I have conducted five seasons of work at Kul-e Farah, making plans, sketches and drawings. The following descriptions are the result of this work.¹⁴

THE KUL-E FARAH ROCK RELIEFS

In order to deal with the representations of the musicians at Kul-e Farah, one must also take into account both the contexts in which they are shown and iconographic details on the various reliefs.

Kul-e Farah I (Pl. Ia, b and Fig. 1)

Flat and vertical panel (width in the centre: 1.68 m.; height varying between 1.20 and 1.35 m.); carved on the mountain side.

Sacrifice of animals in the presence of Prince Hanne. Ten figures and five animals are represented. This rock relief is the best preserved on the site. The figures, however, and particularly their heads, have been damaged by iconoclasts.

An inscription tells us that the relief is the work of Hanne, son of Tahhihi, Prince of Aiapir. It combines animal sacrifices in honour of the gods, the military victories of Hanne, and his vassalage to King Shutur-Nahunte, son of Indada. Inscriptions on the figures give their names and functions. As for the musicians, only their names are still partly legible; those parts of the texts describing their functions, and perhaps also the names of the instruments, are unfortunately not preserved.¹⁵

The representation is divided into two halves: the audience on the left, the officiants on the right (Pl. Ia). The whole scene is orientated towards the right; in the lower right corner are the only two figures facing to the left.

The audience consists of Prince Hanne (height: 1.18 m.) who takes up the whole height of the panel, of the chief minister of his army (height: 0.38 m.), and his cup-bearer (height: 0.47 m.), both represented behind the Prince, one above the other.¹⁶ Hanne and his cup-bearer have their hands clasped at the waist in an

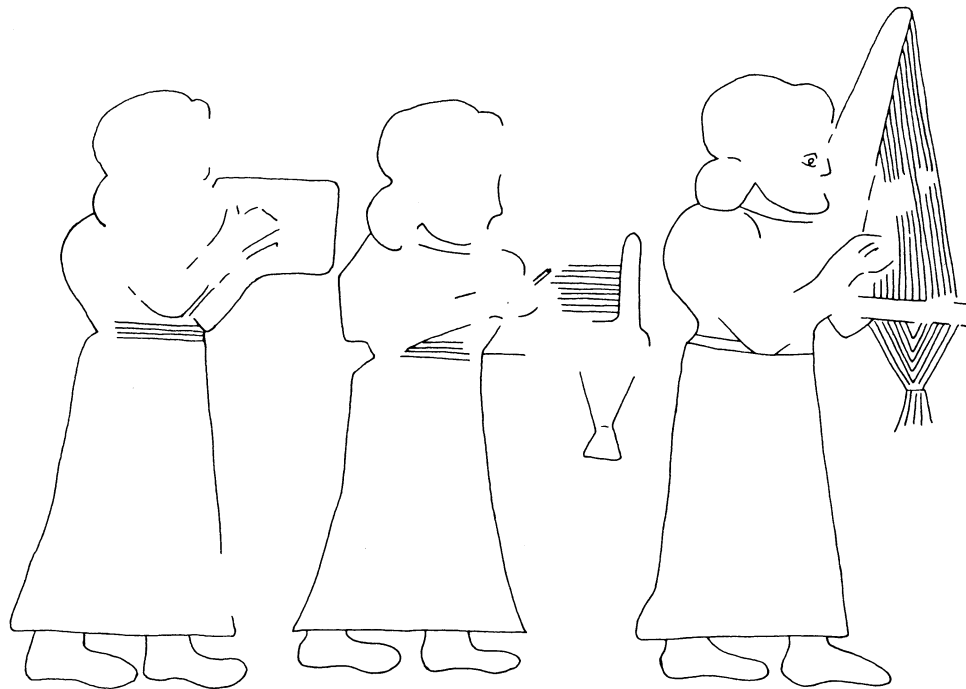


Fig. 1. The musicians of the Kul-e Farah I rock relief (scale 1/4).

attitude of adoration; the chief minister of the army carries a bow, a quiver and a sword.

The officiants are shown in two superimposed pictures. At the top, three musicians are represented in line: a vertical-harp player (height: 0.37 m.; with the harp: 0.40 m.), a horizontal-harp player (height: 0.35 m.) and a drum player (height: 0.36 m.) (Pl. Ib and Fig. 1). At the bottom, the actual scene of sacrifice takes place, itself subdivided into two superimposed registers (Pl. Ia). In the upper register, the corpses of three beheaded rams lie on their backs one above the other; their heads are on a line to the right of the central corpse; above their heads, an acolyte pushes a mountain goat. In the lower register, two other acolytes bring a zebu to an altar: one (height: 0.24 m.) pushes the bovine, the other pulls it by its horns. An altar (height: 0.13 m.), on which a priest (height: 0.26 m.) is making offerings, stands behind the latter.

All the figures appear to have their torsos shown frontally (Pl. Ia, b). Hanne, the cup-bearer and the three musicians wear long robes; the chief minister of the army, the priest and his acolytes wear short tunics. Hanne and the cup-bearer have a very long plait of hair ending in a curl; Hanne wears a round bonnet. The minister and the three musicians have their hair arranged in a bun at the back of the neck. Hanne, the minister and the cup-bearer are bearded; the first musician is beardless, as are probably the two others. As for the priest and his acolytes, because of the bad state of preservation we can only say that they have no plait.

Date: Neo-Elamite period, end of the seventh century B.C.¹⁷

Kul-e Farah II (Pl. IIa)

A large boulder carved on one side (length of the relief: 2.15 m.).

Sacrifice of animals presided over by a king/high priest. Seven figures and seven animals are shown. Erosion has mostly damaged the small figures carved in very low relief. The representation is orientated to the right. The king/high priest (height: 1.90 m.) raises his hands towards the sacrifice. He is shown in profile and seems to snap the fingers of his right hand.

The scene of sacrifice is represented on a much smaller scale (0.80 by 0.80 m.) and is shown in front of the upper part of the king. It is divided into two superimposed registers. In the upper register, a priest (height: 0.40 m.) turns his head backwards and raises his arms in order to draw the king's attention. A second priest (height: 0.25 m.) is cutting up a zebu (length: 0.57 m.) lying on its back. The lower register shows six other zebras already sacrificed, also lying on their backs.

Four dignitaries, also depicted on a very small scale (height: between 0.32 and 0.34 m.), stand in a row behind the king, at the level of his waist. They are shown with their torsos facing front and their hands clasped at the waist.

The king/high priest wears a robe ending below the knees; the four dignitaries appear in long robes. The

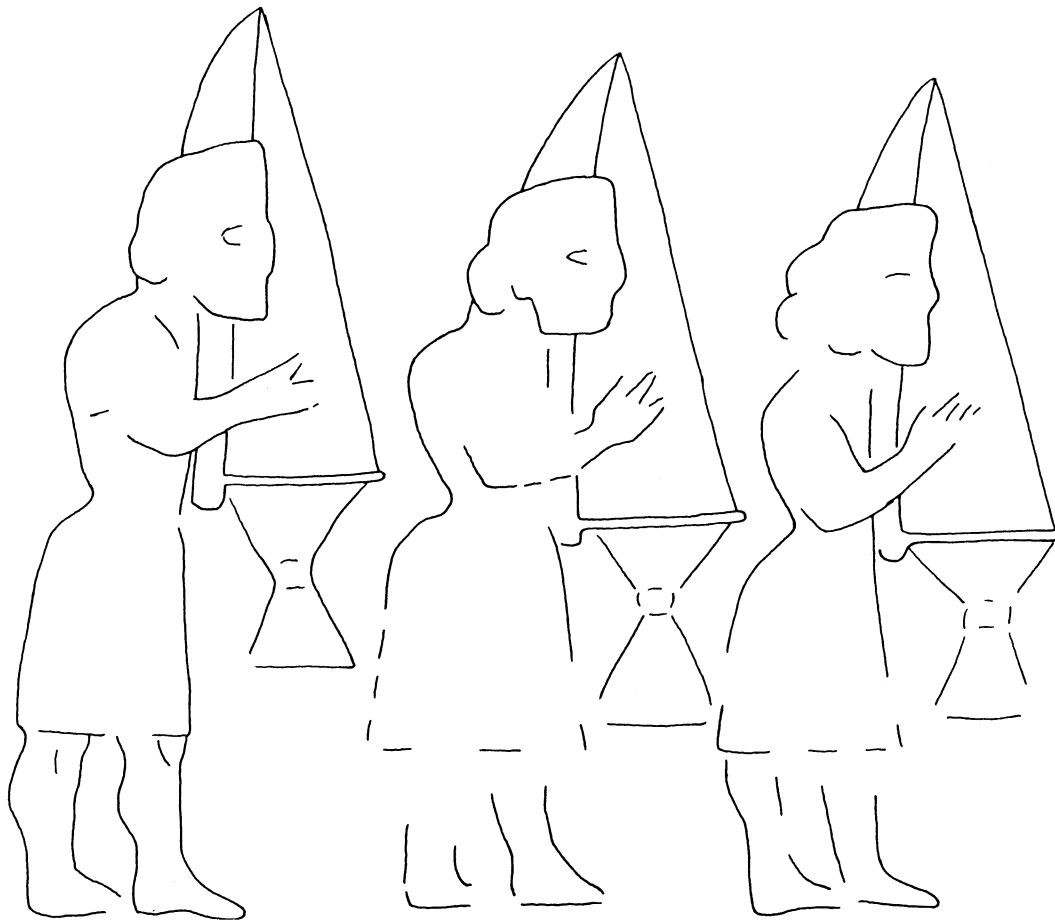


Fig. 2. The musicians of the Kul-e Farah III rock relief (scale 1/6).

two sacrificing priests are completely naked. The king and probably the dignitaries wear a plait and are bearded. The king has a round bonnet. The two priests are apparently beardless and have shaven heads.

Date: Neo-Elamite period, first half of the sixth century B.C.

Kul-e Farah III (Pls. IIb, IIIa, b and Fig. 2)

A large boulder carved all around on its five sides. Liturgical procession of people led by their king, with the statue of a god being carried and with animals for a sacrifice.¹⁸ One hundred and ninety-nine figures, the statue of a god and twenty-one animals are shown. The majority of the figures are lined up in several superimposed registers and are similar (medium height: 0.50 to 0.55 m.): they are in profile with their hands joined in the front, in an attitude of prayer.

The relief is eroded, and the north side is much damaged by cracks and crevices. On the south side several figures have completely disappeared; on some figures of this side however, one may still distinguish

details which bear witness to neat workmanship in the carving.

The narrow east side (width varying between about 0.60 and 0.95 m.; height: 2.55 m.) shows the destination of the procession and forms the centre of the whole composition. It illustrates the area of sacrifice: here are gathered the animals, three zebus and eighteen moufflons.

On the south side (length: between 4 and 4.90 m.; height: between 2.50 and 3 m.), all the figures, with rare exceptions, are turned to the right, that is towards the east side of the boulder (Pl. IIb). At their head, on the extreme right, stands the statue of a god (height: 2 m.) carried on a dais supported by four kneeling figures, led by a foreman. The god raises his hands. Five priests precede the divine statue: one of them turns around to the statue and raises his hands to draw the attention of the god; another bears the ritual knife and leads three naked priests to the area of sacrifice. Two important figures (height: 0.78 m.) are isolated behind the statue.

On the south-west and west sides, all the figures are

turned to the right and follow the procession represented on the south side.

On the north side (length: between 5.50 and 6.90 m.; height: between 1.92 and 2.27 m.) appears the king (height: 2.06 m.) with frontal torso and hands clasped at the waist; his head is turned to the left, towards the east side (Pl. IIIa). All the figures behind the king are shown in profile to the left. Fifteen others represented in front of him, however, are turned to the right. These figures fill the space between the great image of the king and the east side; they occupy moreover a rock surface of very mediocre quality. Their orientation to the right, facing the king, indicates that they are in fact behind him. Among these figures are a priest who displays two lustration vessels to the king and, just behind him, three musicians (Pl. IIIb and Fig. 2), vertical-harp players (height of the third one, with the harp: 0.72 m.).

The procession which extends all around the boulder has to be seen from above and considered as a unique whole orientated towards the sacrificial area on the east side. There is only one procession at the head of which is the group with the statue of a god, the sacrificing priests (south side), the king, the priest bearing the lustration vessels, and the three harpists (north side). Behind them, among the crowd of worshippers, one can see dignitaries wearing long robes and a few of them half-length robes; in the sequence of the procession they precede the common people who wear short tunics.

The procession has just arrived at its final destination, that is in the sanctuary of Kul-e Farah. The statue is about to be brought down from the dais, since those carrying it have knelt down. The sacrifice will be held shortly: on the south side, three ritually naked priests make their way towards the herd of animals and a fourth one draws the attention of the god; on the north side, a priest displays two vessels to the king for the lustration ritual.

Only the king, the four carriers and the three naked priests are shown with frontal torso. All the other figures, as well as the divine statue, are shown in profile.

The divine statue, the king, the dignitaries, the four carrying the statue and their foreman wear long robes. Some dignitaries and the priest drawing the attention of the god wear half-length robes. The priest with the ritual knife, the priest with the vessels, the three harpists, and the common people wear short tunics. The three sacrificing priests are naked for the sake of ritual purity.

The great majority of the figures have a plait of hair falling down their back, and they have short beards. The divine statue seems to wear a wig, and its face is beardless. The king and the priest with vessels have long hair falling in a mass on the back of the neck; the king has a long beard. The four carrying the statue and

the three harpists wear their hair in a bun at the back of the neck; those carrying the statue have short beards; their foreman and the priest with ritual knife have short hair. The harpists are beardless. The three naked priests have their heads shaven and are beardless.

Date: Neo-Elamite period, eighth–seventh century B.C.

Kul-e Farah IV (Pls. IVa, b, Va, b and Fig. 3)

Large relief (length: 17.70 m; height: about 6 m.) carved on the mountain side.

A ritual banquet of people headed by the king; the relief is connected with a fire altar hollowed out of a boulder.¹⁹ One hundred and forty-four figures are represented (Pl. IVa). The composition is fragmented and split up into several groups often composed of superimposed rows. With rare exceptions, all the figures are the same (height: between 0.45 and 0.55 m.): each lifts a meatball to the mouth with the right hand; the left hand is outstretched, their torsos are shown frontally with both shoulders visible.

The general state of preservation is mediocre and the majority of the figures are very much eroded. Details preserved on some of them, however, show us that the carvings were neatly and carefully executed.

The banquet is shown as a great congregation of standing figures, divided into two sections on either side of the sitting king. The king sits enthroned at the top of a panel with five superimposed registers. Surrounding him are the highest dignitaries, the chief of the army, bearing bow, quiver, and sword, and his household. He is the only one represented drinking and eating a complete meal (Pl. IVb). Food is on a table in front of him, drinking-vases are on a table behind him, and servants bring him food and drink. Another servant kneels and prepares food. The whole composition is focussed on the figure of the king and is arranged from top to bottom.

The scene of the banqueting king is located about the middle of the relief. All those taking part in the banquet, with rare exceptions, are turned towards the king: the left section of the congregation looks to the right, the right one looks to the left. The scene of the banqueting king is prominent because of its location in the top register of the central panel, and attention is drawn to it by the rows of opposed figures shown in the three lower registers and separated by an empty space (Pl. IVa).

Despite the apparent disorder, the figures on the left and right-hand sides of the central panel with the king show a simple and rigorous arrangement. All the upper figures are dignitaries wearing long robes who are at the head of the two sections of the congregation, behind the direct entourage of the king.

Six musicians follow the dignitaries; they are



Fig. 3. The Kul-e Farah IV rock relief: the musicians and their leader (scale about 1/11).

represented high on the rock face in the congregation on the left-hand side (Pl. Va, b). The musicians are divided by a space into two groups, each with one horizontal and two vertical-harp players (Fig. 3); a leader faces them and raises his hands (height of the leader and the six musicians: between 0.48 and 0.53 m.; height of the four vertical-harp players with the instrument: between 0.57 and 0.61 m.).

Fire rituals were performed during the banquet as is indicated by the presence of a boulder located at the foot of Kul-e Farah IV and converted into a fire altar. Five priests are represented close to this fire altar. They are a little away from the rest of the figures and their location seems to be determined by the fire altar; moreover, they are the only figures at the bottom of the relief who wear long robes and they can be distinguished by the buns at the back of the neck. The use of the fire altar during the banquet is indicated by the neighbouring presence of the priests. The altar confirms that the banquet took place in Kul-e Farah.

The king, the dignitaries and the priests wear long robes. The chief of the army wears a half-length robe. The crowd of common people, the musicians and their leader wear short tunics.

Nearly all the figures have plaits of hair falling down

their backs and short beards. The king can be distinguished by a rather longer beard. The priests and the musicians wear buns at the back of the neck. Because of erosion we cannot see whether the priests, the musicians and their leader are beardless or if they have short beards.

Date: Neo-Elamite period, ninth century B.C.

Kul-e Farah V (Pl. VIa)

Rock relief (height: 2.40 m.; width: 1.85 m.) carved on the mountain side.

Sacrifice of animals presided over by a king/high priest; representation of a *thymiaterion*. Six figures and seven animals are represented. Erosion has mostly damaged the small figures carved in very low relief. The representation is orientated to the right. The king/high priest (height: 1.90 m.) raises his hands towards a sacrifice of animals, apparently snapping the fingers of his right hand; he is shown in profile.

The scene of sacrifice, carved on a much smaller scale (length: 0.90 m.; height: 0.40 m.), is placed in front of the king's hands, and is divided into two juxtaposed parts. On the left-hand side, a priest is cutting up a zebu lying on its back. On the right-hand

side, six other zebus, already sacrificed, are also lying on their backs.

Four dignitaries represented as a very small size (height: between 0.20 and 0.28 m.) stand behind the king, one above the other; they are shown with their torso's facing front and their hands clasped at the waist.

A *thymiaterion* (height: 0.60 m.) can be seen in the field under the scene of sacrifice.

The king/high priest and the dignitaries wear long robes. The sacrificing priest is naked for the sake of ritual purity. The king wears a bonnet and his hair falls down onto his back; he has a long beard. The dignitaries have long hair and short beards. The priest probably has a shaven head and no beard.

Date: Neo-Elamite period, middle of the sixth century B.C.

Kul-e Farah VI (Pl. VIb)

Large boulder carved on one side (height: 3.75 m.; width: 2.80 m.). Unfinished rock relief.

Liturgical procession with the statue of a god being carried. Fourteen figures and one statue of a god are shown, partially eroded. The representation is turned to the left. The divine statue (height: 2.05 m.) is carried by four figures who each have one knee on the ground. The statue is shown in profile with its hands raised in an attitude of intercession. On the right-hand side of the porters stands their foreman (height: 0.50 m.).

Behind the statue, nine small figures (height: between 0.60 and 0.63 m.) are represented in groups of three in three superimposed registers. A figure of very high rank is at the head of the row on the middle register, with frontal torso and hands clasped at the waist. This figure is followed by the chief of the army, also shown with frontal torso, and carrying a quiver. The seven other figures are shown in profile with their hands joined in front in an attitude of prayer; among them two dignitaries and five subjects of lesser rank can be distinguished.

The iconography of Kul-e Farah VI is incomplete. The left-hand side of the boulder had been prepared for sculpture but remained undone; it should perhaps have received the image of the king, the animals, the priests and the musicians, as on Kul-e Farah III.

Although much smaller, the Kul-e Farah VI procession of worshippers was conceived on the same model as the Kul-e Farah III procession. The Kul-e Farah VI procession has also arrived at its destination: the divine statue is about to be lifted down from the dais, since the four porters have already knelt down.

The divine statue, the figure of very high rank, the two dignitaries and the four porters wear long robes. The chief of the army appears in a half-length robe, while the humbler subjects and the porters foreman have short tunics.

The statue seems to wear a wig and is beardless. The

figure of very high rank, the chief of the army and the four porters all wear their hair in a bun and have short beards. The two dignitaries and the humbler subjects have plaits falling down their backs and they have short beards. The head of the foreman of the porters is very eroded.

Date: Neo-Elamite period, eighth century B.C.

Summary

The six votive rock reliefs show us the liturgical ceremonies which took place in the sanctuary of Kul-e Farah: procession with a divine statue, sacrifices of animals and ritual banquets. The procession ended with a sacrifice of animals as we can see on Kul-e Farah III. The sacrifices of animals and the banquets were followed by fire offerings as demonstrated on the Kul-e Farah I relief and suggested by the fire altar at the foot of the Kul-e Farah IV relief.

The common subject matter of the reliefs has to be underlined: the sacrifice of animals is shown on four monuments (five if we add the unfinished Kul-e Farah VI) and the procession on two of the same monuments; only the banquet, represented on another relief, Kul-e Farah IV, does not show the sacrifice of animals.

Musicians took part in the three different ceremonies, but they are represented on only three of the six rock reliefs: Kul-e Farah I, III and IV (Pls. Ib, IIIb, Va, b). As for Kul-e Farah VI, the absence of musicians is probably due to the incomplete state of this relief. To explain their absence on Kul-e Farah II and V, two hypotheses may be considered. First, there was no musical accompaniment: the ceremonies would thus have changed by the time of the two most recent monuments on the site, Kul-e Farah II and V. Second, the musicians, although actually present, were not represented, perhaps because of the unsophisticated character of both reliefs and by the choice of iconography where the main theme is paramount.

Elamite society, as it appears on the Kul-e Farah rock reliefs, was rigorously organized in different classes. This hierarchy is expressed through different conventions, mostly in combination: "social perspective", i.e. varying the size of the figures according to their importance; representation in frontal view or in profile; clothes; cut of hair, and beard.

The religious ceremonies, as illustrated on each relief, are also rigorously organized. The social rank and the role of each participant in the sacred feast are scrupulously reflected by the individual's position in the ordering of the figures in the scenes; the most important figures, for instance, are at the head of a procession or at the centre or top of a group.

This study of the reliefs is necessary for showing the conventions used and is helpful in determining the function, the rank and the role of the musicians.

The clothing of the musicians, however, does not

provide particular information. On the other hand, their hair dressed in a bun, their beardless faces and their position in the scenes reveal both their privileged hierarchy as well as their religious function.

The clothing, long robe or short tunic, is not distinctive of the musicians. On Kul-e Farah I (Pl. Ia, b and Fig. 1), the musicians wear long robes like Prince Hanne and his cup-bearer, whereas the priests wear short tunics. On Kul-e Farah III, the musicians wear short tunics (Pl. IIIb and Fig. 2) like the majority of the figures and some members of the clergy (Pls. IIb, IIIa). On Kul-e Farah IV, they wear short tunics (Pl. Va, b and Fig. 3) like most of the figures, whereas the priests have long robes (Pl. IVa, b). In short, all that can be noted is a difference in clothing between the musicians of Kul-e Farah I on one hand, and those of Kul-e Farah III and IV on the other.

The musicians can, however, be distinguished by their hair-buns and their beardless faces from the attendants on Kul-e Farah I, and from most of the figures on Kul-e Farah III and probably on Kul-e Farah IV; they are thus comparable to the members of the clergy.

The position of the musicians in the scenes reveals the importance of their role during the religious ceremony. On Kul-e Farah I (Pl. Ia), they are directly linked to the scene of sacrifice and they are separated from the attendants headed by Hanne. On Kul-e Farah III (Pl. IIIa, b) the musicians are placed at the head of the procession, close to the sacrifice area, together with the divine statue, the king, and the sacrificing priests, just behind the priest who offers the lustration vessels to the king. On Kul-e Farah IV (Pls. IVa, Va, b), they are behind the dignitaries following the entourage of the banqueting king, and they precede the crowd of subjects.

In view of the above, it may be argued that the musicians have to be considered as full members of the clergy and that they fulfilled an essential role in the progress of the liturgy. That is why they are closely associated with the sacrifice of animals on Kul-e Farah I and III (Pls. Ia, IIIa), and why they are close to the king in the sacred banquet of Kul-e Farah IV (Pl. IVa).

THE SANCTUARY OF KUL-E FARAH

A study of the sanctuary provides further information about the religious ceremonies shown on the votive reliefs. The gorge of Kul-e Farah was laid out as an extramural sanctuary equipped with cultual facilities.²⁰ On the occasion of certain feasts, particularly at New Year corresponding with the revival of spring, the population went out in procession from the town located in the plain of Izeh.²¹

The procession was only the prelude to the

ceremonies which were carried out in the extramural sanctuary of Kul-e Farah. Sacrifices of animals took place on site and offerings were consumed by fire. At sacred banquets the people gathered around their king. Statues of gods, brought with great pomp, and perhaps also the king, priests and worshippers, were purified by a ritual of ablutions or baths.

Water, necessary for the ceremonies, was to be found in abundance in the open-air sanctuary of Kul-e Farah. A stream, at present seasonal, flows along the gorge and ends in the plain. The gorge gets progressively narrower and leads to a basin located at the foot of a high vertical rock face.²² The basin was worn out of the rock by waterfalls supplied by the winter rains and snows.²³ During the dry season the stream was supplied by a conduit dug through the mountain.²⁴

Four rock reliefs, Kul-e Farah II, III, IV and V, are located alongside the bank of the stream. Kul-e Farah I and VI are a short distance from the bank.²⁵

A sacred area was laid out along the stream's left bank.²⁶ It is defined by the large carved boulders Kul-e Farah II and III, and by a series of other boulders showing on their inner sides plain panels carefully smoothed. A low and flat large boulder, a kind of natural podium, is at the centre; it has also been smoothed on one side. One may assume that it was used in the cult, for instance as a sacrificial table.

The boulder converted into a fire altar at the foot of the Kul-e Farah IV rock relief and a second rougher fire altar complete the cult facilities of the open-air sanctuary of Kul-e Farah.

THE THREE ORCHESTRAS OF KUL-E FARAH

The composition of the orchestras

The Kul-e Farah I orchestra shows the greatest variety with three different instruments for the three musicians: two string instruments, that is a vertical harp and a horizontal harp, and one percussion instrument, a drum (Pl. Ib and Fig. 1). Then comes the Kul-e Farah IV orchestra with two string instruments, horizontal harps and vertical harps, for the six musicians (Pl. Va, b and Fig. 3). The Kul-e Farah III orchestra is composed of three vertical-harp players (Pl. IIIa and Fig. 2).

The Kul-e Farah IV orchestra can be distinguished from the two others by its importance, since it has six musicians instead of three, and by the additional presence of a leader. The six musicians are divided into two groups of three (Fig. 3). The leader has been carved in a natural recess of the rock face. The figures ascend from the leader to the first musician of the second trio; the difference of level is especially important between the last musician of the first trio and the first one of the second trio; it is equal to about one half of a figure. The three musicians of the second trio, on

the contrary, are placed more or less on a horizontal plane. The second trio shows the same composition as the first one. Instead of one single row of six musicians, one can distinguish a double row of three, each trio being headed by a horizontal-harp player.

In any case, it is clear that the trio appears at Kul-e Farah as a basic orchestral composition; on Kul-e Farah IV, the trio is doubled.

The addition of a leader for the six musicians on Kul-e Farah IV requires comment. Unlike the other figures of the relief, he turns his back to the central scene of the banqueting king, and he does not bring a meatball to his mouth. He is closely related to the musicians: he is facing them and raises his hands; his right hand is open and placed under the horizontal harp of the first musician; his left hand is also raised, but his arm has almost entirely disappeared because of erosion. Who is this person? There are four possibilities. First, he could be a conductor, in the present sense of the word, facing the musicians and not playing with them, but this is a fairly modern concept. Secondly, he could be a musical foreman whose presence might be justified by the importance of the Kul-e Farah IV orchestra, composed of six musicians, whereas they are only three on Kul-e Farah I and Kul-e Farah III. Thirdly, he could be a singer. But why then would he face the musicians and not look, as they do, to the centre of the representation with the banqueting king? Moreover, it would be strange to have only one singer. Fourthly, he could be a master of ceremonies, greeting the musicians. All we can say is that he looks like the leader of the musicians, facing them in the same manner as a modern conductor.²⁷

String instruments predominate at Kul-e Farah: out of the twelve musicians, eleven are playing the harp; only one, on Kul-e Farah I (Fig. 1), is playing the drum. The vertical harp is more common than the horizontal harp, since there are eight vertical harps against three horizontal harps. The vertical harp, then, has to be considered as the basic instrument of the orchestras at Kul-e Farah: it is found in the three orchestras, whereas the horizontal harp is absent on Kul-e Farah III (Fig. 2).

Concerning the sequence of the musicians, a comparison of the orchestras with different instruments, namely Kul-e Farah I and IV, shows that on Kul-e Farah I a vertical-harp player is at the head of the orchestra, whereas on Kul-e Farah IV it is a horizontal-harp player. The table below shows in schematic form both the instrumental composition of the orchestras and the sequence of the musicians within each orchestra.

The musicians and the instruments

On Kul-e Farah I the vertical-harp player plucks the strings with his right hand; his left elbow is visible

rock reliefs	vertical-harp players	horizontal-harp players	drum player
Kul-e Farah I	1st	2nd	3rd
Kul-e Farah III	1st, 2nd, 3rd		
Kul-e Farah IV	2nd, 3rd 2nd, 3rd	1st 1st	

under the console. The harp has fourteen strings of which the tassels are tied near the bottom in a decorative fringe. The sound-box is almost entirely visible (Pl. Ib and Fig. 1). The right hand of the horizontal-harp player has disappeared, but the end of the plectrum is preserved and its tip can be seen. The wide end of the sound-box is visible behind the harpist. The instrument has nine strings. Only the outline of a decorative fringe appears under the sound-box; probably the carving of the fringe was abandoned because the sculptor realised he had made an error: the fringe would have only existed here with a vertical harp. The third musician plays the drum with his right hand, holding the instrument in his raised left hand. It seems as if his right might be closed, with the thumb raised.

On Kul-e Farah III the detailed representations of the strings of the harps have disappeared (Pl. IIIb and Fig. 2). The heads of the musicians cover parts of the sound-boxes and small parts of the string areas. The sound-boxes are pointed with the outer side curved and the inner side straight. The console is fastened to the sound-box slightly above the lower end of the box. The tassels of the strings are tied in the middle and form a decorative fringe. The ground-line of the upper register juts up above the musicians in order to make room for the representation of the harps; whether the musicians were carved first (which seems more plausible), or whether this adjustment was planned previously is uncertain. However that may be, this detail reveals the importance that was given to the representation of the musicians, an importance already indicated by their position just behind the priest offering the lustration vessels to the king.

On Kul-e Farah IV the right arms of the musicians and the outline of their hands on the surface of the strings are visible (Pl. Va, b and Fig. 3). The left shoulders of the two horizontal-harp players seem to be represented. As on Kul-e Farah I (cf. Fig. 1), the two horizontal harps have no decorative fringe. This is in contrast to Assyrian horizontal harps.²⁸ The sound-box, the console and marks of the strings of the horizontal harps can all be distinguished. The wide end of the sound-box is visible behind the harpists. The plectrum which was held in the right hand has disappeared due to erosion. The four vertical harps on

Kul-e Farah IV (Fig. 3) are comparable to those on Kul-e Farah III (Fig. 2), with the exception that they do not have the ends of the strings tied in a decorative fringe.

The pose of the vertical-harp players is different on Kul-e Farah I on the one hand and Kul-e Farah III and IV on the other (Figs. 1–3). On Kul-e Farah I, the sound-box is almost entirely visible, while on Kul-e Farah III and IV, the heads of the harpists hide the sound-box and even a part of the strings. This latter position is of course more natural. The vertical harp is plucked with the hand, whereas the horizontal harp is played with a stick-shaped plectrum held in the right hand. On Assurbanipal's reliefs it is clear that vertical and horizontal harps are played with both hands.²⁹ On the three Kul-e Farah rock reliefs, however, the left hand is not visible. Whether the Elamite sculptors did not care enough about realism to represent it, or whether it has been eroded away is not clear. The twelve musicians of Kul-e Farah are all turned to the right. On Kul-e Farah III and IV this orientation has to be seen as a convention arising from the difficulty of representing vertical-harp players turned to the left, as other figures on these reliefs are facing left. The difficulty of representing vertical-harp players to the left is illustrated by an Assurbanipal relief in which the vertical harp held under the left arm is represented as if it were held obliquely, which could not have been the case.³⁰

CONCLUSION

This study of the representations of musicians at Kul-e Farah demonstrates the close relationship between sacred liturgy and music. Music at Kul-e Farah plainly had a religious function. Its importance within the liturgy is attested by the participation of musicians in the ceremonies which took place in the sanctuary. The six Kul-e Farah reliefs were successively executed during approximately four centuries, and the votive significance of each relief added to that of the others. It is therefore possible that the representations of the musicians, carved only on three reliefs, were also relevant for the three others without musicians. The musicians played an essential role in the liturgy, and

enjoyed a privileged position in the social hierarchy. Their representations set them apart from the common people and show iconographic details peculiar to members of the clergy.

On Kul-e Farah I, music occurs while the priest is making an offering on the altar. On Kul-e Farah IV, the harpists play during the banquet; the king is drinking and the worshippers lift meatballs to their mouths. On Kul-e Farah III, on the other hand, the musical accompaniment is represented at a different moment in the ceremony: the procession has just arrived at Kul-e Farah and the sacrifice is about to start.

The liturgical ritual at Kul-e Farah marked the issue of the processions out of the town located in the plain of Izeh. The musicians performed not only in the open-air sanctuary of Kul-e Farah, but also during the long processional marches which moved to music and song, crossing the plain on their way to the sanctuary. Music served as support for the religious songs played and sung by the musicians.³¹ The worshippers probably also sang, even if their vocal accompaniment is apparently not illustrated on the reliefs.

Differences between the orchestras are especially marked with the Kul-e Farah I orchestra, which is the most recent, on the one hand, and the Kul-e Farah III and IV orchestras on the other. They consist of the presence of a drum player on Kul-e Farah I, of differences in the clothing of the musicians, of the type of the vertical harps, and of the pose of the vertical-harp players. In fact, Kul-e Farah I shows differences from the five other reliefs on the site. Kul-e Farah I is characterized by a series of peculiarities. It is the only relief located on the right bank of the stream, and the only one which bears inscriptions. Further, it has the shape of a geometric panel, flat and vertical, it shows figures with long plaits of hair, and the sacrificing priests are dressed. These differences can be explained by a new cultural background which might correspond to the beginning of an Elamite revival at the end of the seventh century B.C.³²

Drawings and photos have been made by the author.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. V. Curtis, Dr. B. Lawergren and Dr. O. W. Muscarella for having read my manuscript and proposed useful comments.

¹ For the position of Izeh within Iran, see E. De Waele, "Travaux archéologiques à Šekāf-e Salmān et Kūl-e Farah près d'Izeh (Mālamir)", *IA* XVI (1981), fig. 1, p. 46; L. Vanden Berghe, *Reliefs rupestres de l'Irān ancien* (Brussels, 1983), pp. 22, 38, 54.

² For maps of the Izeh plain with the location of Kul-e Farah see: De Waele, "Une page d'art iranien. Les reliefs rupestres d'Izeh-Malamir", *Archeologia* 60 (July 1973), p. 32; "Travaux archéologiques", fig. 2, p. 48; Vanden Berghe, *op. cit.*, fig. 13, p. 152.

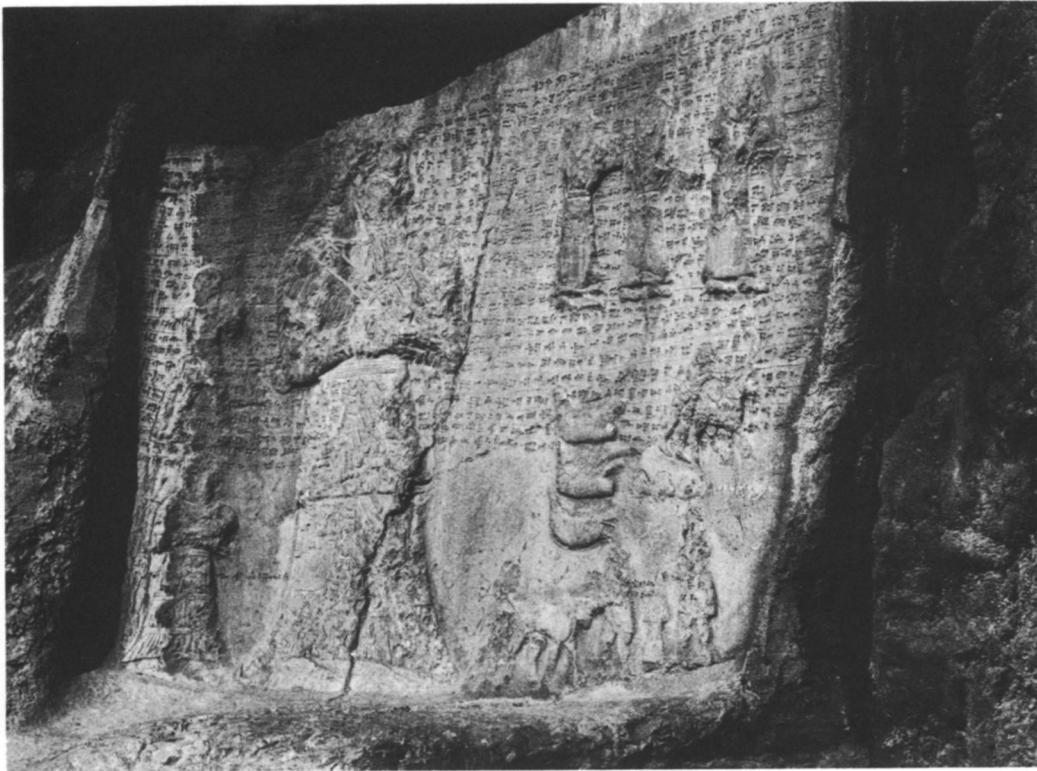
³ For a bibliography of the rock reliefs, see De Waele, "Shutruk-Nahunte II et les reliefs rupestres dit néo-élamites d'Izeh/Malamir", *Revue des Archéologues et Historiens d'Art de Louvain* V (1972), pp. 22–4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 21–4. For explanatory comments about the new numbering, cf. De Waele, "Remarques sur les inscriptions élamites de Šekāf-e Salmān et Kūl-e Farah près Izeh", *Le Muséon* 89 (1976), 3–4, pp. 442–3.

⁵ For plans and sketches showing the location of the Kul-e Farah rock reliefs, see De Waele, "Travaux archéologiques", figs. 3, 5; G. Jéquier, "Description du site de Malamir", in V. Scheil, *Textes élamites-anzanites*, *MDP* III (Paris, 1901), fig. 2, p. 135 (the Kul-e Farah VI relief outside the gorge, at the entrance, is not shown here); Vanden Berghe, *Reliefs rupestres*, fig. 13, p. 152.

⁶ I prefer to call him a "leader" rather than a "conductor". As explained below, his specific role of conductor is doubtful.

- ⁷ A. H. Layard, "A Description of the Province of Khūzistān", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* XVI (1846), p. 75: "The principal group is a bas-relief to the left on entering the gorge . . ."; Jéquier, *op. cit.*, p. 135: "La seule stèle qui soit encore en bon état de conservation . . ."; Vanden Berghe, "Les reliefs élamites de Mālamir", *IA* III (1963), p. 25: "Le relief principal . . ."; *ibid.*, p. 27: "Ce relief, le plus important des sculptures de Mālamir . . .".
- ⁸ Cf. in chronological sequence of publication: Layard, *op. cit.*, p. 76 (the order of the musicians is inverted); Jéquier, *op. cit.*, p. 136; N. C. Debevoise, "The Rock Reliefs of Ancient Iran", *JNES* I (1942), p. 84; Vanden Berghe, "Les reliefs élamites", p. 26; F. W. Koenig, *Die elamischen Königsinschriften*, *AfO* 16 (Graz, 1965), p. 160.
- ⁹ About the horizontal harp, cf. M. Duchesne-Guillemin, "La harpe à plectre iranienne: son origine et sa diffusion", *JNES* 28 (1969), p. 114, fig. 13. About the drum, cf. C. Sachs, *Die Musikinstrumente des alten Ägyptens* (Berlin, 1921), p. 44, quoted from Duchesne-Guillemin, "Note sur la provenance asiatique d'un tambour égyptien", in *AMI* VIII (1937), pp. 53, 55.
- ¹⁰ Cf. De Waele, "Quelques aspects de la religion d'Élam à travers l'art rupestre d'époque néo-élamite d'Izeh/Malamir, *Proceedings of the 1st Annual Symposium of Archaeological Research in Iran*, Nov. 1972 (Tehran, 1972), pp. 3–4; "Une page d'art iranien", fig. pp. 38–40 with descriptive captions.
- ¹¹ First mention of the Kul-e Farah III musicians in De Waele, "Quelques aspects de la religion d'Élam", p. 4, fig. 4. First explicit illustration (drawing) of the Kul-e Farah IV musicians in De Waele, "Travaux archéologiques", fig. 7.
- ¹² De Waele, *Les reliefs rupestres élamites de Šekāf-e Salmān et Kul-e Farah près d'Izeh (Mālamir)*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Université Catholique de Louvain (1976), pp. 47–8, 68, 89–90, 142–3, 161, 175–6, 179, 209, 224, 236, 244–6.
- ¹³ The forthcoming book by B. Lawergren, *Angular Harps: Archaeology and Acoustics* will put the present study into a general Near Eastern context.
- ¹⁴ For my work carried out at Izeh, cf. De Waele, "Travaux archéologiques", pp. 45–61, figs. 1–10, pls. I–IV.
- ¹⁵ For the inscriptions of Kul-e Farah I, cf. De Waele, "Remarques", pp. 443–50; "Travaux archéologiques", pp. 58–61, with bibliography.
- ¹⁶ Cf. W. Hinz, "Die elamischen Inschriften des Hanne", *A Locust's Leg. Studies in Honour of S. H. Taqizadeh* (London, 1962), p. 111; *Das Reich Elam* (Stuttgart, 1964), p. 119.
- ¹⁷ The chronology of the Kul-e Farah reliefs proposed here is taken from my unpublished doctoral thesis, *Les reliefs rupestres*, p. 321–37; cf. also De Waele, "Travaux archéologiques", pp. 50–2. It is not the purpose of this paper to argue the chronology of the reliefs, based on a study of their iconography, composition, style, technical characteristics, and comparison with other monuments. See also P. Calmeyer, "Zur Genese altiranischer Motive", *AMIN* VI (1973), pp. 149–51; E. Carter and M. W. Stolper, *Elam. Surveys of Political History and Archaeology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1984), pp. 45 n. 366, 168, 170–2.
- ¹⁸ Cf. De Waele, "Les processions avec statues divines sur les reliefs rupestres élamites Kul-e Farah III et Kul-e Farah VI (Izeh)", *Akten des VII. Internationalen Kongresses für Iranische Kunst und Archäologie, München, 7.–10. September 1976*, *AMI*, Ergänzungsband 6 (Berlin, 1979), pp. 93–100.
- ¹⁹ For a photograph of the altar, see De Waele, "Une page d'art iranien", fig. p. 43. The altar can also be seen on a sketch showing principally Kul-e Farah IV in "Travaux archéologiques", fig. 7.
- ²⁰ Cf. De Waele, "Quelques aspects de la religion d'Élam", pp. 4–5; "Une page d'art iranien", pp. 31–45. The gorge of Shekaf-e Salman, opposite to Kul-e Farah, on the other side of the Izeh plain, has also been fitted out into an open-air sanctuary, see *ibid.* and "Travaux archéologiques", figs. 4, 6. There is no representation of musicians on the four Shekaf-e Salman reliefs belonging to the Middle Elamite period.
- ²¹ Tepes with Neo-Elamite remains, however, have not been located. Cf. Jéquier, *op. cit.*, pp. 133–4, fig. 1; H. T. Wright *et al.*, *Archaeological Investigations in Northeastern Xuzestan, 1976*, Museum of Anthropology, The University of Michigan. Technical Reports, 10 (Ann Arbor, 1979), pp. 99–105.
- ²² For a plan of the Kul-e Farah gorge, see De Waele, "Travaux archéologiques", fig. 3.
- ²³ A similar basin can be found at Shekaf-e Salman; it has also been eroded out of the rock by waterfalls falling from above the great grotto. Cf. De Waele, "Une page d'art iranien", fig. p. 34; Calmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 151, pl. 39: 2; De Waele, "Travaux archéologiques", fig. 6.
- ²⁴ Cf. De Waele, "Une page d'art iranien", p. 41.
- ²⁵ See the plan and the sketch of the Kul-e Farah gorge in De Waele, "Travaux archéologiques", figs. 3, 5.
- ²⁶ For the situation of the sacred area in the Kul-e Farah gorge, see De Waele, "Travaux archéologiques", fig. 3. For photographs of the sacred area, see "Quelques aspects de la religion d'Élam", fig. 7; "Une page d'art iranien", fig. p. 36.
- ²⁷ I am grateful to B. Lawergren for his observations regarding the identification of this figure.
- ²⁸ A. Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia* (London, 1969) pl. 288; Parrot, *Assur* (Paris, 1969) fig. 76. Moreover, see above, concerning Kul-e Farah I, the fringe peculiar to the vertical harp, but adapted to the horizontal harp and left unfinished: this mis-carving could confirm that the Elamites were unfamiliar with the type of horizontal harp with tassels of strings.
- ²⁹ Moortgat, *op. cit.*, pl. 287; A. Parrot, *op. cit.*, fig. 392.
- ³⁰ Parrot, *op. cit.*, fig. 392.
- ³¹ E. Dhorme, *Les religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie* (Mana, 1: Les anciennes religions orientales, II) (Paris, 1949), p. 209. Elamite practice was not necessarily the same as in Mesopotamia. It seems reasonable, though, to suspect that in Elam, too, song was mixed with instrumental music.
- ³² Carter and Stolper, *op. cit.*, pp. 52–5.



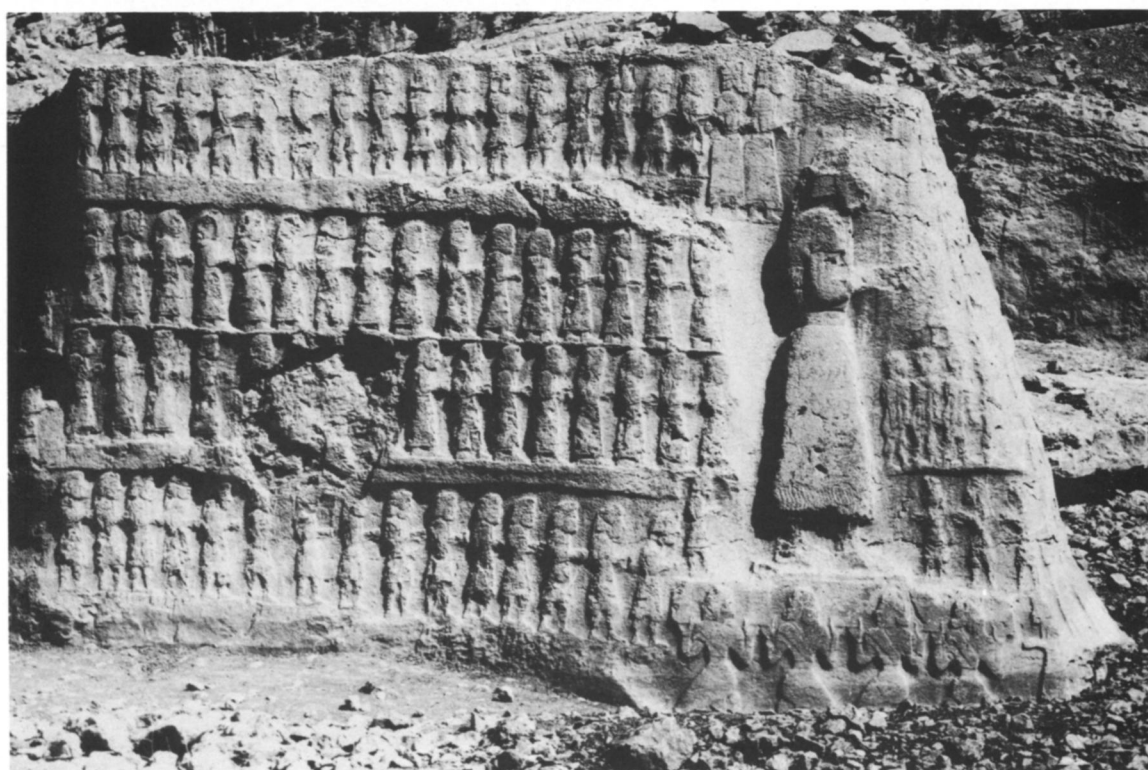
Pl. Ia. The Kul-e Farah I rock relief.



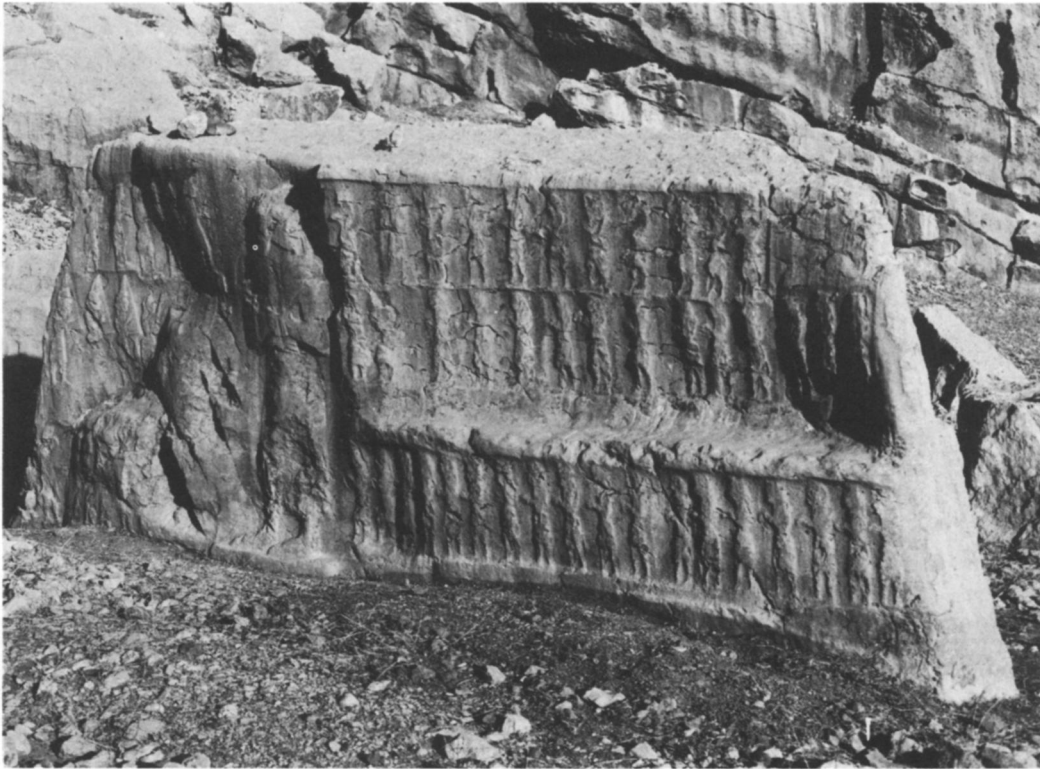
Pl. Ib. The Kul-e Farah I rock relief: detail of the three musicians.



Pl. IIa. The Kul-e Farah II rock relief.



Pl. IIb. The Kul-e Farah III rock relief: south side.



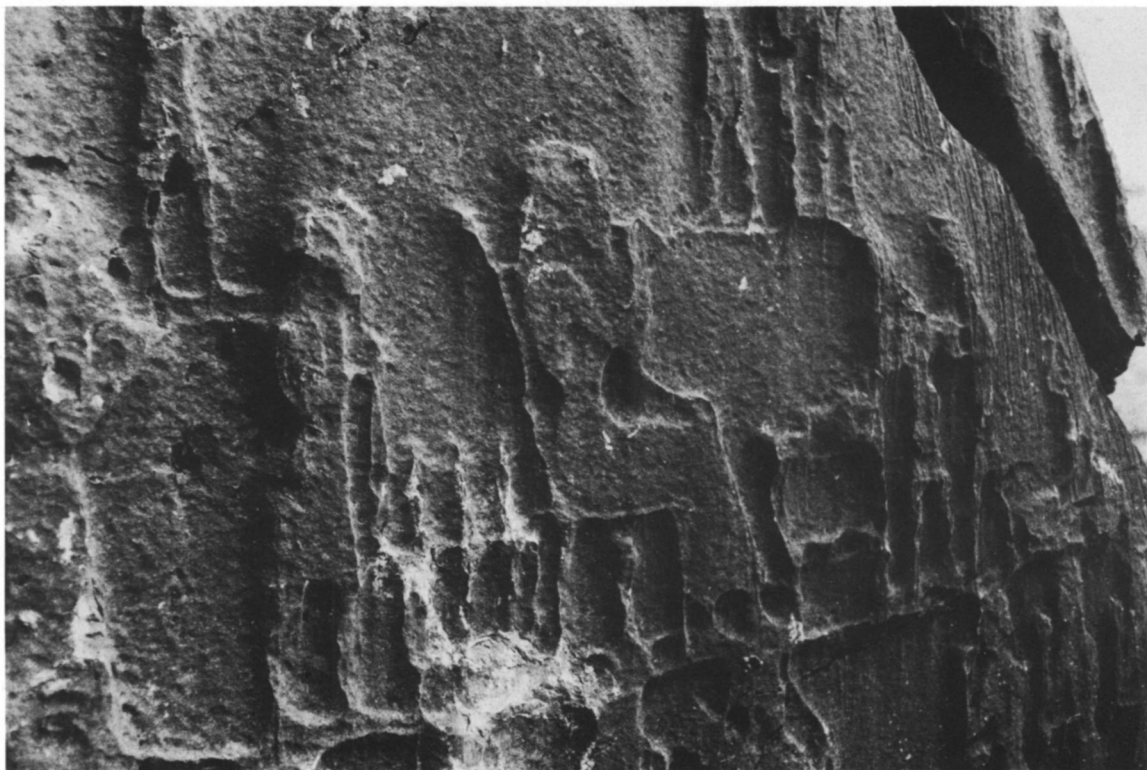
Pl. IIIa. The Kul-e Farah III rock relief: north side with the three harpists on the left.



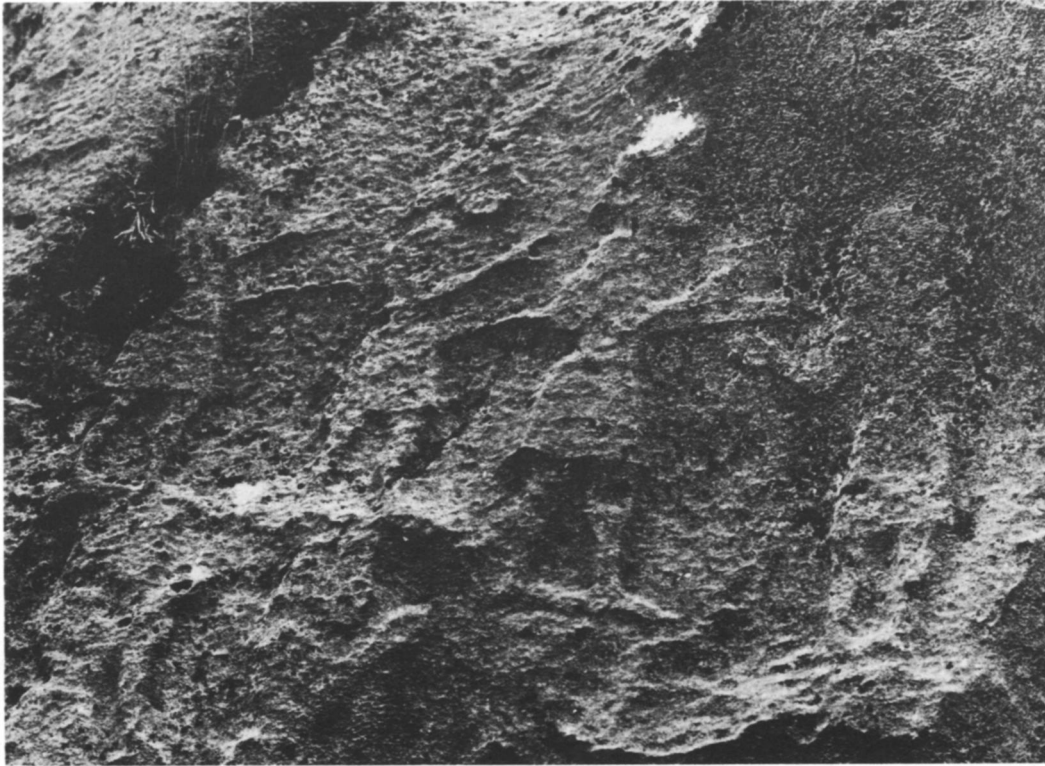
Pl. IIIb. The Kul-e Farah III rock relief, north side: detail of the three harpists headed by the priest with two lustration vessels.



Pl. IVa. The Kul-e Farah IV rock relief: general view showing the position of the six harpists and their leader.



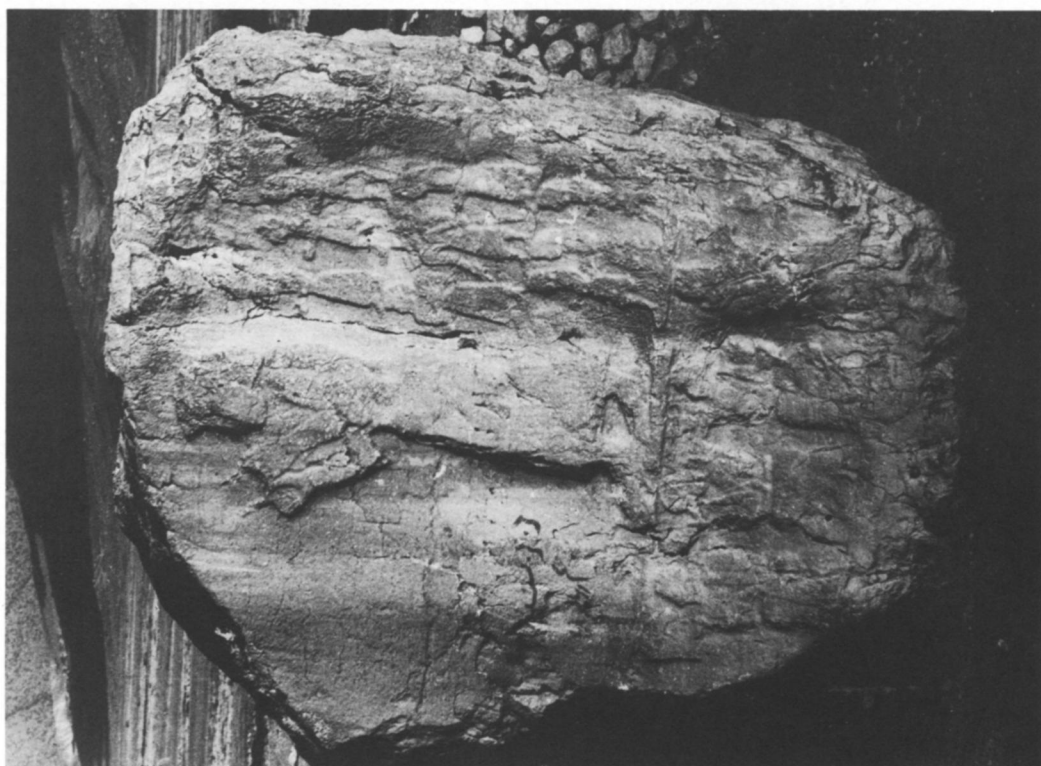
Pl. IVb. The Kul-e Farah IV rock relief: detail of the scene with the banqueting king.



Pl. Va. The Kul-e Farah IV rock relief: detail of the first trio of harpists with the leader on the right.



Pl. Vb. The Kul-e Farah IV rock relief: detail of the second trio of harpists.



Pl. VIb. The Kul-e Farah VI rock relief.



Pl. VIa. The Kul-e Farah V rock relief.